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МИНИСТР ИНОСТРАННЫХ ДЕЛ НАГОРНО - КАРАБАХСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ  
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE NAGORNO KARABAKH REPUBLIC

## Ստեփանակերտ Stepanakert Stepanakert

23 December 2008  
N 131925

N 131925

Mr. Matthew Bryza  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
European and Eurasian Affairs  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Bryza,

Greetings to you and your family for a festive Holiday Season!

We appreciate your efforts aimed at the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, as well as post-war rehabilitation and development of Nagorno Karabakh, Artsakh. We look forward to our continued and expanded cooperation for peace and prosperity in South Caucasus.

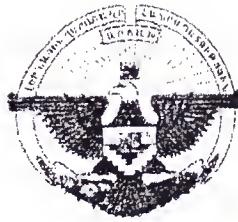
Best wishes for a healthy, peaceful and prosperous 2009.

Sincerely,

George Petrossian

2010

276 *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*



ԼԵՂԱՆԱՀԻՆ ԴՐԱՄԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԱՐՏԱՔԻՆ ԳՈՐԾԵՐԻ ՆԱԽԱՐԱՐ  
МИНИСТР ИНОСТРАННЫХ ДЕЛ НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ  
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE NAGORNO KARABAKH REPUBLIC

Ստեփանակերտ  
Ստեփանակերտ  
Stepanakert

25 December 2008.  
Nº 13/979

**The Honorable Hillary Clinton**  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

Warmest greetings from Artsakh to you and your family for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We highly appreciate the US government efforts aimed at the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, as well as post-war rehabilitation and development of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, Artsakh.

With best wishes of peace and prosperity to you and your great country.

Sincerely,

Georgy Petrossian

**List Of Members of the U.S. Congress who Received the paper  
"Events in Khojaly (Nagorno Karabakh) & Azerbaijan's Misleading Efforts"**

Fistsname	lastname	affiliation
Robert	Aderholt	U.S. Representative
Todd	Akin	U.S. Representative
Rodney	Alexander	U.S. Representative
Gresham	Barrett	U.S. Representative
Roscoe	Bartlett	U.S. Representative
Joe	Barton	U.S. Representative
Howard	Berman	U.S. Representative
John	Boozman	U.S. Representative
Charles	Boustany	U.S. Representative
Corrine	Brown	U.S. Representative
Henry	Brown	U.S. Representative
Dan	Burton	U.S. Representative
G.K.	Butterfield	U.S. Representative
Shelley	Capito	U.S. Representative
Steve	Chabot	U.S. Representative
Ben	Chandler	U.S. Representative
Howard	Coble	U.S. Representative
Steve	Cohen	U.S. Representative
Tom	Cole	U.S. Representative
Mike	Conaway	U.S. Representative
Robert	Cramer	U.S. Representative
Henry	Cuellar	U.S. Representative
Geoff	Davis	U.S. Representative
Lincoln	Davis	U.S. Representative
Norman	Dicks	U.S. Representative
Lloyd	Doggett	U.S. Representative
Phil	English	U.S. Representative
Eni	Faleomavaega	U.S. Representative
Virginia	Foxx	U.S. Representative
Kay	Granger	U.S. Representative
Alcee	Hastings	U.S. Representative
Jeb	Hensarling	U.S. Representative
Rush	Holt	U.S. Representative
Darrell	Issa	U.S. Representative
Jesse	Jackson	U.S. Representative
William	Jefferson	U.S. Representative
Eddie	Johnson	U.S. Representative
Timothy	Johnson	U.S. Representative
Carolyn	Kilpatrick	U.S. Representative
Peter	King	U.S. Representative
John	Kuhl	U.S. Representative
Rick	Larsen	U.S. Representative
John	Lewis	U.S. Representative
Frank	LoBiondo	U.S. Representative
Betty	McCollum	U.S. Representative
Mike	McIntyre	U.S. Representative
Gregory	Meeks	U.S. Representative
Brad	Miller	U.S. Representative
Dennis	Moore	U.S. Representative

Fistsname	lastname	affiliation
James	Moran	U.S. Representative
John	Murtha	U.S. Representative
Solomon	Ortiz	U.S. Representative
Bill	Pascrell	U.S. Representative
Mike	Pence	U.S. Representative
Joseph	Pitts	U.S. Representative
Todd	Platts	U.S. Representative
Earl	Pomeroy	U.S. Representative
David	Price	U.S. Representative
Adam	Putnam	U.S. Representative
Nick	Rahall	U.S. Representative
Jim	Ramstad	U.S. Representative
Silvestre	Reyes	U.S. Representative
Ciro	Rodriguez	U.S. Representative
Ileana	Ros-Lehtinen	U.S. Representative
Dutch	Ruppersberger	U.S. Representative
Tim	Ryan	U.S. Representative
David	Scott	U.S. Representative
Pete	Sessions	U.S. Representative
Christopher	Shays	U.S. Representative
Bill	Shuster	U.S. Representative
Michael	Simpson	U.S. Representative
Ike	Skelton	U.S. Representative
Adam	Smith	U.S. Representative
Cliff	Stearns	U.S. Representative
Thomas	Tancredo	U.S. Representative
John	Tanner	U.S. Representative
Gene	Taylor	U.S. Representative
Bennie	Thompson	U.S. Representative
Nydia	Velázquez	U.S. Representative
Diane	Watson	U.S. Representative
Henry	Waxman	U.S. Representative
Robert	Wexler	U.S. Representative
Ed	Whittfield	U.S. Representative
Heather	Wilson	U.S. Representative
Joe	Wilson	U.S. Representative



# *Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic*

TO: Foreign Affairs Legislative Aide  
FROM: Robert Avetisyan, NKR Representative to the United States  
DATE: February 16, 2009  
RE: Events in Khojaly (Nagorno Karabakh) & Azerbaijan's misleading efforts

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Dear Colleague:

Every year around this time, Azerbaijan intensifies its propaganda campaign and lobbying efforts, using grossly falsified version of events that occurred in February of 1992 in Khojaly (Nagorno Karabakh) and near Agdam (Azerbaijan).

Enclosed, please find a Fact Sheet about these events, which is backed by verifiable information. We urge you to refrain from any statements on Khojaly without considering the information provided herewith.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional information.

Thank you,

Robert Avetisyan  
Representative of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic

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The Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in the United States is based in Washington, DC and works with the U.S. government, academia and the public representing the official policies and interests of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, Artsakh.

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# Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in the United States

## Washington, DC

February 2009

### FACT SHEET

#### EVENTS IN KHOJALY (NKR) AND NEAR AGDAM (AZERBAIJAN) ON FEBRUARY 25-27, 1992

*Khojaly is also often spelled as Xocali, Khojaly, Khodzhaly, Khojalu, Khocalu, Khocali, Khocaly*

#### Azerbaijan turned Khojaly into a launch pad for indiscriminate bombardment of Karabakh

In 1991 and early 1992, Azerbaijan used an Azeri inhabited village of Khojaly in Nagorno Karabakh as a launching pad for indiscriminate artillery and rocket fire on Stepanakert, the capital of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR), located only a short 15-minute drive from Khojaly. By the end of February 1992, intensive fire from Khojaly and other Azeri military strongholds in Karabakh had killed 243 people, including 14 children and 37 women, and wounded 491, including 53 children and 70 women. In addition, systematic and intense artillery and rocket fire against civilian targets in Stepanakert paralyzed the city, destroying hospitals, administrative buildings, schools, and homes. By controlling Khojaly, Azerbaijan also prohibited access to Karabakh's airport, the only link with the outside world, which was used to bring food and medical aid. Furthermore, Khojaly was also used as a staging area for military offensives on Stepanakert and nearby Armenian-populated villages. Thus, Khojaly became a legitimate military target for Self-Defense Forces of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

#### Legitimate target for NKR Self-Defense Units

In early January 1992, Nagorno Karabakh authorities decided to neutralize this military target and informed the Azeris. The NKR authorities also transmitted this information by radio, TV, loudspeakers, leaflets and other methods to warn the Khojaly civilian population of the upcoming operation, giving the civilian population an opportunity to exit the area through a safe corridor. Azerbaijan's leadership in Baku, as well as local authorities, and military commanders in Khojaly knew about the corridor, its width and direction. Both Azerbaijani President Ayaz Mutalibov and Khojaly Mayor Elman Mamedov in their 1992 interviews confirmed this fact. During two weeks leading to the Khojaly operation, NKR Self-Defense Forces observed a mass exodus of the civilian population from Khojaly through the provided corridor (see on the map).

The operation to neutralize Khojaly base of the Azeri armed forces began at 11:00 PM on February 25 and was successfully completed within five hours. Nagorno Karabakh forces took full control of the area, killing dozens of military personnel during the operation. Unfortunately, 11 civilians became unintended victims. About 700 civilians and military surrendered to NKR Self-Defense Forces. The captured civilians were returned to Azerbaijan in the following days, while the military personnel was later exchanged for the Armenian military prisoners and civilian hostages held by Azerbaijan.

#### Events on the territory controlled by Azerbaijan, 7 miles from Khojaly, after the Khojaly operation was over

When the military operation began in Khojaly, a large group of civilians and armed military personnel from Khojaly used the provided humanitarian corridor to exit the battlefield and began moving in the direction of the Azeri-controlled Agdam. Near Nakhichevanik village of Karabakh (outside of the provided corridor), the group provoked a gun battle with the defenders of Nakhichevanik, which resulted in numerous death on both sides. On February 28 and early March 1992, in the area then fully controlled by Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani and Turkish journalists videotaped images of the hundreds of killed and, during the second video shooting session, also mutilated bodies.

Since then, official Baku has falsified the events and used the human tragedy to persistently fan anti-Armenian hysteria to demonize the Armenian people in the eyes of the Azeris and the international community. It used the images to incite anti-Armenian sentiment and intolerance, which resulted in murders and calls from Azeris to wipe out Armenians as an ethnic group.

## Conclusion

Responsibility for the tragic loss of civilian life on February 26-27, 1992 on the outskirts of Agdam, territory fully controlled by Azeri forces, lies with the political and military leadership of Azerbaijan.

**First**, the Azeri leadership used the territory of Khojaly for indiscriminate artillery attacks on civilian targets, thus turning the town into a legitimate military target for NKR Self-Defense Forces.

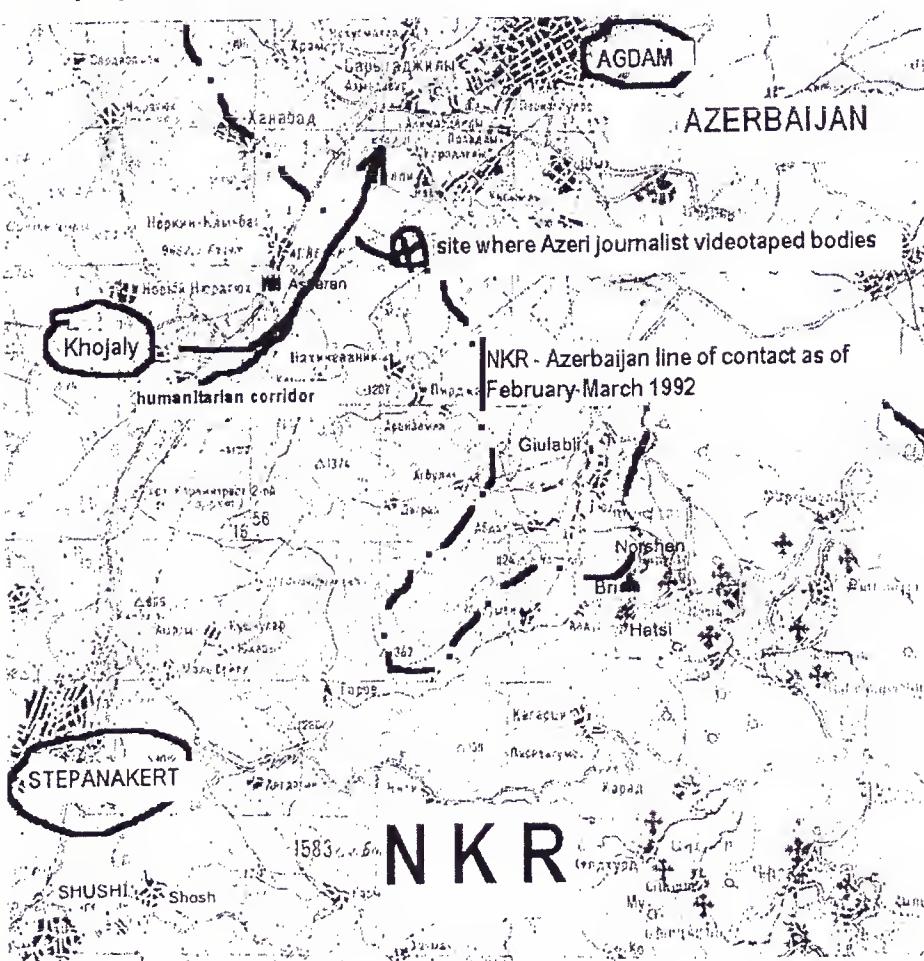
**Second**, the Azeri leadership intentionally prevented the civilian population from leaving the militarized village.

**Third**, the Azeri leadership failed to safely relocate civilians from Khojaly after public warnings of upcoming military operation, although it had many opportunities to do so.

**Fourth**, retreating Azeri forces provoked an exchange of fire with NKR Self-Defense Forces some five miles from Khojaly, which resulted in losses on both sides.

**Fifth**, those who had continued, full access to the site of reported close-range, mass killing are responsible for it. The reported killing of hundreds of civilians with incidences of barbaric mutilation of bodies took place near Agdam (some seven miles from Khojaly), on the territory controlled by Azeri forces. Free access to the site by Azeri and Turkish journalists is clear evidence to that end.

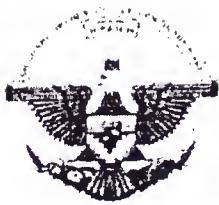
**In addition**, Azerbaijan continues to create ground for a prolonged human tragedy by inciting anti-Armenian sentiments and intolerance in Azeri society. Such a policy stalls efforts to build bridges between Armenian and Azeri people and achieve eventual, long-lasting peace between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh.



*Background data, journalistic investigation and academic research materials to support the above information are available at the NKR Office and can be provided on-demand.*

The Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in the United States is based in Washington, DC and works with the U.S. government, academia and the public representing the official policies and interests of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, Artsakh.

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МИНИСТР ИНОСТРАННЫХ ДЕЛ НАГОРНО-КАРАБАХСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ  
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REPUBLIC

Արքայի նախարար  
Հեղափոխության  
Տեղապահը  
Տեղապահը

06 April 2009  
14/354

Ambassador Karen B. Stewart  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Democracy,  
Human Rights and Labor  
U.S. Department of State

Dear Ambassador Stewart:

The people and the government of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR) appreciate and welcome the U.S. championship in establishing true democratic principles throughout the world. The people of Nagorno Karabakh share the ideas of democracy and we remain determined to continue building a strong democratic state for the benefit of all nations in the region.

The annual Country Reports by your Bureau usually portray a balanced approach to existing challenges in foreign countries, objectively assessing main problems in relation to human rights and democratic development. We consider these reports to be reputable documents by the State Department, which must contain well-grounded and objective information on human rights situation in different parts of the world.

Unfortunately, your most recent, 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, particularly in its parts concerning Armenia and Azerbaijan, contains inaccurate information which may lead to the wrong and biased understanding of the essence, as well as the cause and consequences of the Azerbaijan–NKR conflict.

It is with profound disappointment that we noticed a continued distortion of the Nagorno Karabakh problem. The reports on Armenia and Azerbaijan, unfortunately, failed once again to consider the whole complex of facts and preconditions for the current situation in the region. The one-sided language in the *Human Rights* report utterly disregards the opinion and the will of the people residing in the Nagorno Karabakh Republic itself – a people that were subjected to aggression by Azerbaijan for trying to exercise their right to live in freedom under the government of their own choosing. We are convinced that the use of phrases like “ethnic Armenian separatists” to describe the NKR people, who sacrificed immensely for their freedom, as well as many other unacceptable definitions and numbers are clearly the result of Azerbaijan’s anti-Armenian propaganda, and therefore must be excluded from the report language since they undermine the spirit and the goals of your Bureau’s activity.

The formation of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in 1991 was conducted in full compliance with then-acting Soviet legislation and norms of the international law, and was called to rectify Joseph

Stalin's arbitrary decision to place this ancient Armenian territory under Soviet Azerbaijan's rule. Seven decades of Soviet Azerbaijan's administrative rule resulted in sharp shift of the demographic situation in Nagorno Karabakh, accompanied with dozens of killings and oppression of the local Armenian population. All this, along with the Azerbaijani manner of dealing with any expression of the free will, prove the righteousness of our decision, and also show the impossibility of a peaceful co-existence of Azeris and Armenians within a common administrative entity.

Since day one of its proclamation, the Nagorno Karabakh Republic embarked on the path towards building an independent, democratic state, which can guarantee its citizens their rights and freedom. Several rounds of elections on all levels, assessed by international observers as free and transparent, as well as effective governance within its borders make the NKR one of the very few viable states in our part of the world where democratic processes have become irreversible.

We highly appreciate the continued U.S. efforts as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group to facilitate finding a lasting and just solution to the Nagorno Karabakh's conflict with Azerbaijan. We realize that the settlement process is a very difficult challenge, and thus have repeatedly affirmed our readiness to work closely with international mediators towards establishing peace and stability in the South Caucasus.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you review the language and the essence of the official report of the U.S. State Department where it relates to Nagorno Karabakh. A balanced and objective report could promote the U.S. mediation efforts and contribute to establishing confidence among the conflicting sides.

Sincerely,

Georgy Petrossian,  
Minister



CC:

**Hillary Rodham Clinton**  
U.S. Secretary of State

**Mr. Matthew Bryza**  
U.S. Co-Chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group

**Marie L. Yovanovitch**  
U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia



# Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic

April 23, 2009

**The Honorable Jim Gibbons  
Governor, State of Nevada  
United States of America**

Dear Governor Gibbons:

I am writing on behalf of the government of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR) to convey our concern over the March 31, 2009 proclamation you issued that marked "Azerbaijani remembrance day".

We welcome your personal leadership on the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 by proclaiming a "Day of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide" in your state some years ago.

Unfortunately, the denial of Armenian Genocide remains the state policy in Turkey and, since its independence, also in ethnically Turkish Azerbaijan.

As part of this policy, in 1998 the Azerbaijan government arbitrarily designated March 31 as the "Day of the Genocide of Azerbaijanis" with no regard to historical evidence or actual Azerbaijani grievances, but with an obvious intention to confuse and mislead and to promote Armenian Genocide denial.

While probably based on good intentions to commemorate innocent loss of life, your proclamation of March 31, 2009 has unfortunately served the Azerbaijani government's xenophobic campaign against Armenians everywhere, including in your state of Nevada.

I would be happy to meet and otherwise communicate with your staff should you have any questions about this issue and possible ways to rectify it.

Please accept assurances of our respect for you and our highest regard for the state of Nevada.

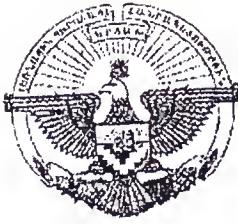
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Avetisyan".

Robert Avetisyan  
Permanent Representative

This material is distributed on behalf of the Government of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. The Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic is registered with the U.S. Government under the Foreign Agent Registration Act. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

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Email: [info@nkrusa.org](mailto:info@nkrusa.org)



## NAGORNO KARABAKH REPUBLIC

May 8, 2009

**David T. Johnson**  
Assistant Secretary for the  
Bureau of International Narcotics  
and Law Enforcement Affairs  
US State Department

Dear Mr. Johnson,

The authorities of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR) highly appreciate and welcome the US role in establishing true democratic principles in the international relations, as well as the consistent American co-chairmanship within the OSCE Minsk Group, aimed at reaching a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Here, we would like to draw your attention to the issue of great significance for our republic.

On February 27, 2009 the US State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs has released its 2008 Report, which referred to Nagorno Karabakh as a transit way for drug trafficking to Azerbaijan "from Iran through the south of the (Azerbaijani) state or Nagorno Karabakh". In recent years, after a comprehensive consultation similar formulations were removed from the Bureau's Annual Reports. We express our strong objection and regret with the fact, that some parts of the reputable document have been prepared basing on false and unverified information. A cursory monitoring of the situation in our republic would show that Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan are separated not only by administrative, but also by military boundaries, which indicates the weakness of the allegations.

Also, we would like to underline that the NKR authorities are fully committed to continue strengthening the democratic values in our society, and seek for a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan. For almost two decades, our government has been responsibly implementing its administrative obligations and ensuring the security of its people, as prescribed by the state legislation. Therefore, apart from legal aspect, mentioning Nagorno Karabakh under the section "Azerbaijan" of the Report is absolutely unacceptable.

It is obvious that the false allegations against the NKR have been initiated by our opponent country, which continues sparing no effort to mislead the international community as a whole, and your Bureau in particular. With full responsibility we reiterate our assurances that Nagorno Karabakh's territory is not being used in any way as a transit route for drug trafficking. This is conditioned both by Azerbaijan's political, economic and communication blockade, and, most of all, by effective preventive measures by the NKR law enforcement bodies, which resulted in a complete eradication of drug-dealing in Nagorno Karabakh.

There are many facts in support of this argumentation. Since May, 1994 the NKR authorities have maintained the cease-fire regime with Azerbaijan without international peacekeeping forces.

Nagorno Karabakh effectively controls the contact-line between the Karabakh and Azerbaijani armed forces, which evidences a high self-organization of our state.

In 2008, there were no registered cases of bringing drugs in to Nagorno Karabakh from abroad, including Iran. The border between Nagorno Karabakh and Iran is closed, and is strictly controlled by NKR. The NKR legislation prohibits cultivation of narcotic plants and drug production. Our Government has established a quota for importing narcotic drugs from Armenia for healthcare purposes. Here, the whole process of acquisition, storage and disposal of drugs, as well as destruction of the expired medicines is also under a strict control by special Police subunits.

The NKR reiterates readiness to receive a special monitoring group of international experts for an independent verification of facts. We believe a detailed on-site examination of this issue would allow the US Department of State to verify our arguments and remove the erroneous accusations and concerns, which can distort the objective political situation in the NKR and postpone the peace and stability in our region.

Please accept, Mr. Johnson, assurances of our highest consideration.

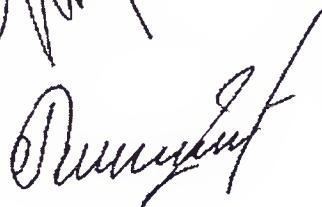
Sincerely,

Minster of Foreign Affairs

Head of the NKR Police Department



Georgy Petrossian



Robert Shaferian

CC:

Hillary Rodham Clinton  
U.S. Secretary of State

Edward Jurith  
Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy

Marie L. Yovanovitch  
U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia

# ARTSAKH NEWSLETTER

November 2008

*Artsakh Newsletter is produced by the Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in the United States covering political and economic developments in Nagorno Karabakh, Artsakh.*

## POLITICS

Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia signed a joint declaration on Nagorno Karabakh peace process. By putting their signatures under the Moscow document, Armenia and, most notably, Azerbaijan stated their intention to seek only "political" ways of resolving the decades-long conflict and recommitted to the "Madrid Principles" as proposed by the OSCE Minsk Group last year. NKR Foreign Ministry welcomed the Declaration, but noted the absence of Artsakh from the effort. The Ministry also reiterated that Artsakh's freedom and independence were not debatable.

Earlier, the Armenian president said that a resolution should include: 1) Azerbaijan's recognition of Artsakh's right to self-determination, 2) an Artsakh-Armenia land border, and 3) international guarantees of security for Artsakh.

Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group met with President Sahakian in Stepanakert as part of their regional shuttle diplomacy. Recognizing Artsakh's rights to both physical and economic security, the co-chairs reiterated that the resumption of the full negotiation format was a matter of time. In an interview with RFE/RL, President Sahakian also emphasized the need for tripartite -- Armenia-Azerbaijan-Artsakh -- format of negotiations as affirmed by the 1994 OSCE Summit in Budapest. (Budapest Summit's final document on Karabakh: [http://nkrusa.org/nk\\_conflict/documents.shtml#three](http://nkrusa.org/nk_conflict/documents.shtml#three))

An Azeri commando unit attacked NKR positions in the south-east attempting to advance closer to the Line of Contact, the de-facto border between Artsakh and Azerbaijan. This is Azerbaijan's second serious violation of the cease-fire regime this year. In both cases, NKR Defense Army successfully rebuffed the attacks inflicting losses to the enemy.

(Statement by the NKR MFA: <http://www.nkr.am/en/news/2008-11-17/102/>)

Official Stepanakert congratulated president-elect Barack Obama on his victory. In his letter, President Bako Sahakian expressed hope that the new U.S. Administration would work toward stronger US - NKR ties and also continue the much-needed U.S. economic assistance to Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh).

## BUSINESS, ECONOMY & SOCIETY

NKR Parliament passed a law on fighting money-laundering and terrorist financing. To prevent criminal activity, the new law has established a division of financial monitoring within the NKR Ministry of Finance. An inter-agency commission, chaired by Prime Minister Ara Harutyunian, held its first session to discuss the legislation.

AmeriaBank of Armenia opened its first branch in Stepanakert, Artsakh. Along with traditional banking services, the branch will also be the first in Karabakh and Armenia to develop new investment banking. AmeriaBank will support small, medium and large businesses and will extend mortgage and other consumer credits. (More at: <http://www.arka.am/eng/banks/2008/11/10/11948.html>)

Young social activists from Holland and Georgia explored Artsakh's education system. Representatives of European educational NGOs arrived in Artsakh to discuss the possibility of organizing regional 'summer universities', aimed at raising tolerance and mutual confidence among the Caucasus' nations.

The population of Karabakh is growing. October 2008 saw over 20% increase in newborns as compared to the same period of last year.

Artsakh government is planning to open the Stepanakert Airport to receive small and mid-sized airplanes. The improvement of air and ground communication systems is thought to be critical to boosting country's economic development and tourism.

***About the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, Artsakh***

*The de-facto independent Nagorno Karabakh Republic, Artsakh, was formed in 1991 based on a declaration of its legislature and results of a subsequent popular referendum. Supported by Armenians around the world, the people of Artsakh then defended their choice in a war unleashed by Azerbaijan. NKR/Artsakh has emerged as a democratic, rule-of-law state with capable armed forces, a growing market economy, and an independent foreign policy. Artsakh continues to work towards international, formal recognition of its independence.*

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We would like to hear from you. Just reply to [info@nkrusa.org](mailto:info@nkrusa.org) with your comments. Thanks!

\*\*\*

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# ARTSAKH NEWSLETTER

January 2009

*Artsakh Newsletter is produced by the Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in the United States covering political and economic developments in Nagorno Karabakh, Artsakh.*

## POLITICS

Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (USA, France and Russia) passed to Armenian and Azeri foreign ministers a “**technical document**” intended to promote the **Karabakh settlement** and reach an agreement over the basic principles for the conflict resolution.

Armenian Foreign Minister visited Artsakh to meet with President Bako Sahakian and other officials. Edward Nalbandian said a negotiated settlement must ensure the realization of **Artsakh's right to self-determination**. (More at: [http://armeniaforeignministry.am/pr\\_08/081222\\_stepan.html](http://armeniaforeignministry.am/pr_08/081222_stepan.html) )

NKR Permanent Representation in France organized a public event dedicated to the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Artsakh Liberation Movement**. French legislators, city mayors, members of the French-Armenian organizations, and journalists attended the event.

An Armenian delegation attended the Council of Europe-sponsored conference on regional transportation issues in Baku, Azerbaijan, which prompted local extremists to organize a “**chase after Armenians in Baku**” hotels [aiming] to kill or, at least, beat the delegates”. The leader of the group pledged to continue “pursuing Armenians in Baku” and **resort to assassination to stop such visits**. Despite these threats, the Armenian delegation took part in the regional event and returned to Armenia unharmed.

**Baku continues to fuel a regional arms race**. Next year, Azerbaijan is planning to begin production of armored vehicles and small arms with further plans to also manufacture unmanned aerial vehicles and explosives. NKR Foreign Ministry called Azeri intentions “threatening the NKR security, and pregnant with regional destabilization.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) resumed its work in Artsakh after filling a vacant position in its local office. “**NKR authorities welcome the RFE/RL**. We realize that the development of a civil society heavily depends on the freedom of speech,” commented the NKR Foreign Ministry.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan once again disclosed its aggressive and destructive attitude towards Armenia and Artsakh. In his New Year's speech addressed to his nation, Azeri President Ilham Aliyev voiced military threats to solve a Karabakh conflict by restarting a war.

NKR Permanent Representative in Germany **Gayane Apinyan** attended the conference in Berlin devoted to perspectives of conflict resolution. As usual, Azeri representatives tried to threaten Artsakh by military resolution of the conflict. In response to these threats, Karabakh diplomat reminded about a huge number of casualties from both sides during the Karabakh war and in what unfavorable conditions the people of Nagorno Karabakh managed to protect their natural right for freedom. She emphasized that Nagorno Karabakh is ready to defend its independence and urged Azerbaijan to stop aggressive rhetoric and recognize the right of Artsakh people for self-determination. (More info on the event at: <http://nkr.am/en/news/2008-12-25/119/>)

The NKR State Committee on prisoners of war, the missing and hostages characterized a recent allegation of the Azerbaijani analogical body about keeping thirty-nine Azeri hostages in NKR as a fake and regular disinformation aimed at misleading international community and traducing NKR. It stated that NKR followed faithfully the principals of Geneva Convention and has returned all hostages to Azeri side after military conflict. (More info at: <http://nkr.am/en/news/2009-01-15/121/>)

Freedom House released its annual survey of global political rights and civil liberties. Along with many other countries it assessed the situation with democracy in Artsakh. The global watch dog categorized Nagorno Karabakh as "partly free" unlike Azerbaijan classified as "not free" country.

President Bako Sahakian appointed **Vardan Barseghian NKR Deputy Foreign Minister**. Barseghian has served as Artsakh's top diplomatic envoy to the United States since 1999. By another presidential decree **Robert Avetisian**, Counselor at Artsakh's DC office, was appointed **NKR Permanent Representative to the United States**.

**"Artsakh will never be part of Azerbaijan,"** President Sahakian reiterated in an interview to PanArmenian.Net adding that to achieve peace the right of Artsakh people for self-determination should be recognized. (Full interview: [http://nkrusa.org/nk\\_conflict/interviews.php?id=9](http://nkrusa.org/nk_conflict/interviews.php?id=9))

Armenian and Azeribajani presidents met in Zurich, Switzerland, trying to advance the Karabakh peace process. Both presidents assessed the meeting as "constructive and positive" and instructed their foreign ministers to continue regular meetings to **resolve existing disagreements over basic principles of settlement**.

Following the meeting, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs released a joint statement stressing that the Karabakh conflict should be resolved based on the **principles of territorial integrity, self-determination and non-use of force**. (OSCE MG statement: <http://www.osce.org/item/36070.html>)

Separately, American Co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza emphasized the importance of **Artsakh's immediate participation in the negotiation process**.

(More at: [http://parliament.am/news.php?do=view&ID=3146&cat\\_id=1&day=20&month=01&year=2009&lang=eng](http://parliament.am/news.php?do=view&ID=3146&cat_id=1&day=20&month=01&year=2009&lang=eng))

#### BUSINESS, ECONOMY & SOCIETY

The average **household income grew by 22%** in January-September 2008 compared to the same period of last year, reported the NKR Statistics Service.

NKR National Assembly debated the 2009 state budget. According to parliamentary sources, the next **budget will remain socially-oriented**, ensuring increase in pensions and benefits for vulnerable groups of population. Despite the global financial crisis, Artsakh hopes to maintain high development rates counting on continued growth in agriculture and construction.

The site of the **ancient Tigranakert was designated as an NKR National Park**. The ruins, unearthed in the Askeran region by an international group of scientists in 2005, are believed to be part of the capital-city of Tigranakert, established by the Armenian King Tigran the Great (95-55 B.C.) as one of the four same-name capitals of the Kingdom of Armenia at the time. (More on Tigranakert at: <http://www.tigranakert.am/>)

NKR President Bako Sahakian signed the FY2009 state budget, which set a 14% GDP growth target for 2009. Social welfare is due to increase by more than 16%, while pension will rise by more than 17% in comparison with last year.

Askeran and Martakert local governments successfully rendered an account for 2008 indicating a growth of agricultural productivity by more than two times. The regions also continued their work in infrastructural development allocating money for reconstruction of roads, schools and improving of irrigation and gasification systems.

A number of issues related to the economic situation in the republic were discussed during a meeting of NKR President with prime minister and members of the government.

Two other radio-stations ("Radio Hayk" and "Mix Media") received licenses to broadcast their programs in Artsakh that will cover the whole territory of the republic.

New investments and successful measures against tax invasion resulted in **increased state revenue collection** in 2008. (Full report: [http://nkrusa.org/nk\\_conflict/speeches.php?id=12](http://nkrusa.org/nk_conflict/speeches.php?id=12))

NKR government discussed a new document on equal and balanced **development of Artsakh's regions**, which envisages continued support to development of agriculture, including cultivation of crops, cattle-breeding, and food processing.

The global financial crisis will not affect Artsakh's plan to become a net exporter of electricity. The country is making **progress on building new hydro-power stations**.

Karabakh Telecom, one of the largest companies in Artsakh, plans to spend **\$2 million to improve Artsakh's healthcare**. (More at: [http://nkrusa.org/news/daily\\_news.php?id=1508](http://nkrusa.org/news/daily_news.php?id=1508))

NKR Permanent Representation in France launched a **new website**. The French-language website offers information about Artsakh, its history, economy, domestic and foreign policy, as well as periodically updated video news from Artsakh. Visit the website at [www.haut-karabagh.com](http://www.haut-karabagh.com)

#### ***About the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, Artsakh***

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# ARTSAKH NEWSLETTER

March 2009

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## POLITICS

Meeting with OSCE mediators in Stepanakert President Bako Sahakian said that no comprehensive solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict would be possible **without NKR's full participation** in all stages of the peace process.(More at: <http://www.president.nkr.am/en/news/meetingsWithForeignDelegations/515/>)

After the meeting, the U.S. co-chair of the Minsk Group Matthew Bryza outlined **three guiding principles** for the settlement: non-use of force, right to self-determination and territorial integrity.

U.S. Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA) reiterated his support for **U.S. recognition of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic** stressing that any peace settlement should "make sure that people of Artsakh are self-governing and safe". Sherman spoke with Armenian journalists in Washington.

An Artsakh documentary received **Golden Mike Award** from the Radio and Television News Association of Southern California. "Nagorno Karabakh/Artsakh: The Struggle for Freedom" was also screened last year on Capitol Hill, during an event marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Artsakh Liberation Movement. (Awards Banquet video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxyZ6LpSzvo&feature=channel\\_page](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxyZ6LpSzvo&feature=channel_page))

Ensuring greater U.S. political and economic support remained the focus of **Artsakh's diplomatic efforts in Washington**, said NKR Deputy Foreign Minister Vardan Barseghian in an *Armenian Reporter* commentary, which offered a brief overview of his nearly decade-long service as NKR Permanent Representative to the United States and his vision for continued Artsakh advocacy in Washington.  
(More at: <http://www.reporter.am/go/article/2009-03-07-defending-artsakh-s-interests-in-the-united-states>)

## BUSINESS, ECONOMY & SOCIETY

Artsakh Hydro Power Station (Artsakh HEK) OJSC launched an unprecedented **initial public offering (IPO) in energy sector**. Individuals and businesses in Artsakh, Armenia and elsewhere are offered, for the first time, to become shareholders of a joint-stock company. "This is a stable source of income since the whole output will be consumed by Artsakh," said Aram Kayfajian of Armenbrook, the underwriter for this IPO. The company issued **50mln shares at \$3 each expecting a 15% profit**.  
(To buy shares go to: <http://www.artakhpp.com> or [http://www.armenbrook.com/page-al-services\\_investment.html](http://www.armenbrook.com/page-al-services_investment.html))

Nagorno Karabakh set up a separate exhibit booth at the **2009 International Tourist Exhibition in Berlin**, which included almost all countries of the world and covered an area of more than 20,000 sq. meters. The booth was reported to enjoy popularity among visitors.  
(More at: <http://int.armradio.am/index.php?part=3>)

Photographic works by twenty-six Czech and Austrian photographers, participants of the expedition to Artsakh in 2006-2008, are presented at the Franciscan Monastery in Prague, Czech Republic. The "**Ancient country of Artsakh**" exhibition will run until March 31.

Nineteen families of NKR Defense Army officers moved into their **new apartments** in Mardakert, Artsakh. In 2009 the government expects to provide another 175 servicemen with new apartments.

Artsakh marked the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the late **Armenian military and political leader Vazgen Sargsian** with commemoration events in the capital of Stepanakert, military units and elsewhere.

NKR Statistics Service reported a **16% increase in newborns** in the first two months of this year compared to the same period of 2008.

Bakour Karapetian, a writer and essayist, sent a letter to President of Azerbaijan calling on Ilham Aliyev to cool down the 'passions' of Azerbaijani historians and encourage them to **quit falsifying histories** of peoples living in today's Azerbaijan, namely: the Talysh, Kurds, Lezgins, Avars, Persians, and others. (Read more at: <http://www.panarmenian.net/news/eng/?nid=29369>)

## HISTORICAL REFERENCE

On February 26-29, 1988, the Azeri town of Sumgait became the scene of **mass pogroms and brutal killings of ethnic Armenians**. The massacre claimed dozens of innocent lives, setting a dangerous precedent which was later repeated in Baku and elsewhere in Azerbaijan. Conducted with the knowledge of Soviet Azerbaijani authorities, the pogroms saw no comprehensive investigation. The organizers and many of the executors remained unpunished. Commemoration events took place in Artsakh and around the world. (More at: [http://nkrusa.org/nk\\_conflict/sumgait\\_massacre.shtm](http://nkrusa.org/nk_conflict/sumgait_massacre.shtm); <http://budapest.sumgait.info/sumgait.htm>; <http://www.armenians.com/Genocide/Sumgait/index.html>)

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# ARTSAKH NEWSLETTER

April 2009

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## POLITICS

Thirty-four Members of U.S. Congress advocated for greater economic and political support of Armenia and Artsakh in a letter to key congressional appropriators, Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Ranking Member Kay Granger (R-TX). The American legislators also called for **greater U.S. engagement with the Nagorno Karabakh Republic**. (Read more: <http://www.armenianow.com/?action=viewArticle&AID=3647&CID=3521&IID=1230&Ing=eng>)

NKR and Armenian parliamentarians held joint meetings in Stepanakert to discuss issues related to social security, education and science, healthcare, culture and youth affairs in the framework of Armenia-Artsakh **inter-parliamentary cooperation**.

The Office of the NKR Ombudsman Yuri Hairapetian applied for **full membership** in the European Institute of Ombudsmen.

Artsakh political parties, including those represented in the National Assembly issued a statement calling on the international community to **recognize the Armenian Genocide** and the independence of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

## BUSINESS, ECONOMY & SOCIETY

NKR Prosecutor-General Arshavir Gharamian reported that **11 corruption charges** have been filed in the first 3 month of 2009, as a result of which some AMD80mln (\$216,200) were returned to the state treasury.

Artsakh Hydro Power Stations (Artsakh HEK) joint-stock company **extended the deadline** for its initial public offering (IPO). The company plans to use the proceeds from this placement to build three small hydro-power plants, whose production would satisfy 85% of NKR's energy needs. [Buy shares](#)

NKR **economy expanded by more than 14%** in 2008 despite the global economic recession: GDP totalled more than AMD87bn (\$23.5 million) or AMD623,000 (\$2,037 per capita). The 2009 state budget increased by 22% compared to last year's.

A series of **state-sponsored programs** were launched in Artsakh in 2008. They include free provision of school textbooks (\$356,700), tuition compensation for college and university students from socially disadvantaged families (\$135,100), organization of scouting and sports camps (\$37,000), and founding of a scientific center (\$20,800). Some 190 families received mortgage credits, while the agricultural sector and rural communities received over a billion drams in subsidies.

Ashot Hairapetian, a runner from Artsakh, **won an annual marathon** in Meudon, France. Among six hundred runners, he finished the 4900-meter distance first in 15 minutes and 37 seconds. Arthur Petrossian, a fellow sportsman from Artsakh, finished second in his age group.

After more than 70 years of Soviet-imposed separation, the icon of Annunciation to the Most Holy Mother of God was returned to the Gandzasar Monastery. The state decided to **return the religious symbol** to the Artsakhian Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which celebrates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its re-establishment in Artsakh.

Forty-seven families (462 people) resettled in the Kashatagh Region of Artsakh in 2008. The government continues to work towards improvements to **spur the resettlement process** in the region.

**Khristofor Ivanian Military and Sports College** celebrated its 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Named after a retired general and WWII veteran who while in his 70s came to Artsakh to volunteer his skills in the war effort, the college accepts cadets aged 15-17 after they graduate from 8-year course at secondary schools.

"Defender of Homeland", the youth wing of the Artsakh Union of Freedom Fighters held its third congress in Stepanakert that focused on **military and patriotic education** of the youth.

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May 2009

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## POLITICS

Armenian President Serge Sargsian joined President Bako Sahakian and other leaders to celebrate **May 9** "Triple Holiday" in Artsakh, marking the Victory of the Allies in WWII, the 1992 Victory of Shushi, and the Formation of the NKR Defense Army. Read more at: [http://www.nkrusa.org/country\\_profile/nkr\\_army.shtml](http://www.nkrusa.org/country_profile/nkr_army.shtml)

Marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **cease-fire agreement** that effectively stopped the large-scale fighting in Nagorno Karabakh, the co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group representing France, Russia and the United States called on all sides to implement the provisions of the ceasefire, the "Proposals on strengthening the ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" agreed in 1995, as well as the Co-Chairs' proposal at the 2008 Helsinki Ministerial Conference to pull back snipers from the front line.

In **holiday amnesty**, President Sahakian fully pardoned four and partially pardoned eight convicted individuals. Another 36 applications were turned down due to the gravity and the perceived social danger of the committed crimes.

NKR Prime Minister visited Armenia's **Shirak Province** as part of a cooperation program, during which Ara Haroutunian met with his Armenian counterpart Tigran Sargsian, the Primate of the Shirak Diocese Arch. Mikael Ajapahian and participated in a number of events dedicated to his visit. Read more at: <http://www.karabakh.net/engl/inform/2009/5/7.htm>

World-renown French-Armenian singer **Charles Aznavour**, recently appointed Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations offices in Geneva, paid his first-ever visit to Artsakh. Mr. Aznavour, his sister Aida and daughter Seda, accompanied by Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, inaugurated The Charles Aznavour Cultural Center in Stepanakert. For his outstanding services to the Armenian people, President Aznavour awarded Mr. Aznavour with the "Gregory the Illuminator" Order. Charles Aznavour also visited the Gandzasar Monastery, Artsakh's spiritual and architectural treasure. More info at: <http://www.gandzasar.com/>

Former Armenian foreign minister presented his new book in Stepanakert. Titled **Speaking to be Heard**, the work contains Vartan Oskanian's speeches during his decade as Armenia's top diplomat. National Assembly Chairman Ashot Ghoulian, legislators, NKR diplomats, journalists, and students participated in the event. Read more at: <http://www.nkr.am/en/news/2009-05-05/145/>

## BUSINESS, ECONOMY & SOCIETY

Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Board members, affiliate representatives and executives visited Artsakh to inaugurate **completed projects**, including the Hadrut Hospital and the drinking water supply system in Berdashen village, and to coordinate further programs. For their contribution to fund's projects in Artsakh, NKR President Bako Sahakian awarded a group of members NKR state medals. Read more at: <http://www.president.nkr.am/en/news/meetingsWithDiaspora/588/>

Foreign Ministry's Consular Service reported that the number of **foreign visitors to Artsakh** doubled in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period of last year. Most visitors came from France, Iran, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Russia, and Poland. Read more at: <http://www.nkr.am/en/news/2009-05-07/147/>

A page on Artsakh was launched on the website of the Berlin International Tourism Exhibition (ITB) containing information on nature, historical and architectural monuments, as well as spiritual treasures of Artsakh. Read more at: <http://www.nkr.am/en/news/2009-05-08/148/>

**Holiday festivities** were held all over Artsakh to mark the May 9 holiday. Defense Army units marched on the streets of Stepanakert in their parade uniform. Artsakhian artists held an art exhibit presenting over 70 paintings and sculptures. Local and guest performers entertained thousands of spectators who gathered at an open-air concert at Stepanakert's Revival Square. At night, spectacular fireworks concluded the public celebrations. Read more at: <http://www.nkr.am/en/news/2009-05-11/149/>

Former President Arkady Ghoukasian as well as legendary commander Arkady Ter-Tadevosian (Liberation of Shushi) were conferred Artsakh's highest honor – the title of **Hero of Artsakh** by receiving the Order of Golden Eagle. Battle Cross Orders and For Courage medals were also given to other veterans, some of them posthumously. Read more at: <http://www.president.nkr.am/en/news/lawsOrders/580/>

A group of **disabled Artsakhian veterans** received new hand-operated cars as part of a program launched by President Bako Sahakian a year ago.

The Stepanakert Office of the British **HALO Trust** reported that 333 mines, 2174 UXO (unexploded ordnance) and 260 cluster bombs were found and destroyed in Artsakh from January to April 2009. The Office also reported about two mine-related accidents during the same period, involving one casualty and destroyed farming machines.

An art exhibit was presented by Paul Mellor titled *Look into the Past, Gaze into the Future*. The British photographer and philanthropist tells Artsakh's story through capturing the nature, monuments, everyday life and faces of ordinary people. He organized several exhibits in different countries and used the proceeds to fund his wife's **humanitarian work in Artsakh**. "BirthLink" non-profit organization has provided assistance to the Stepanakert Children's Hospital and other medical facilities in Artsakh, focusing primarily on mother and child health issues. Read more at: <http://www.birthlinkuk.org/whatmenu.htm>

## HISTORICAL REFERENCE

### **Liberation of Shushi**

The liberation of Shushi on May 9, 1992 was the first major military success of the Armenian forces in Artsakh during the 1991-1994 war. This victory also symbolized the rebirth of the Armenian spirit that resonated far beyond Artsakh, to all corners of the world. The **Artsakh Defense Forces** then swiftly established a vital land-link with Armenia proper. Fierce battles continued throughout 1992-1994, but the **Shushi Operation** made all subsequent victories possible. In May of 1994, Azerbaijan, having been forced out of most of Artsakh and adjacent territories, agreed to sign a **cease-fire agreement** with Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia. Read more at: <http://www.shushi.org/en/liberation.php>

On May 5, 1994 senior officials from Azerbaijan, NKR and Armenia agreed a formal protocol (Azerbaijan added its signature on May 8, 1994) that called for an end to military actions. The agreement was mediated by Russia and took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan during the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. The **Bishkek Protocol** paved the way to a cease-fire agreement signed by the parties on May 9-11 and finalized on May 12. The cease-fire holds largely due to the **combat readiness** of the armed forces of Artsakh and Armenia.

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**ARTSAKH DOCUMENTARY TAKES GOLDEN MIKE AWARD**  
Radio and TV News Association of Southern California makes the pick

**PRESS RELEASE**

March 20, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC – The Radio and Television News Association of Southern California (see [www.rtna.org](http://www.rtna.org)) awarded a documentary “*Nagorno Karabakh, Artsakh: The Struggle for Freedom*” with a prestigious Golden Mike for Best TV Documentary in 2008.

The film was co-written and co-produced by a Los-Angeles-based journalist Peter Musurlian (Globalist Films) and former NKR Permanent Representative to the USA, currently NKR Deputy Foreign Minister Vardan Barseghian.

Narine Aghabalyan, head of the “*Tzir Katin*” (Milky Way) Studio in Stepanakert, NKR, and a U.S.-based freelance journalist Vardan Akchyan provided most of the video material for the documentary.

The film was aired on TV6 in Burbank, California, on September 16, 2008 and also screened the next day at a Capitol Hill event titled “NKR/Artsakh: 20 Years of Freedom, Democracy, and Progress” and attended by Members of the U.S. Congress, diplomats, prominent human rights activists, experts, and community representatives.

Consequently, the documentary was posted on the [ArtsakhOnline](https://www.youtube.com/user/ArtsakhOnline) YouTube channel, maintained by Artsakh’s diplomatic mission, reaching an audience of over 11,000 viewers in a few months. The film represents a powerful combination of interviews, narration and video footage that eloquently presents Artsakh’s story.

Established by the Association 59 years ago, the Golden Mike Award is one of the most-coveted by Radio and Television journalists. Among this year’s award recipients is CNN’s well-known journalist Larry King.

To view the documentary “*Nagorno Karabakh, Artsakh: The Struggle for Freedom*” please visit the ArtsakhOnline:  
[www.youtube.com/user/ArtsakhOnline](https://www.youtube.com/user/ArtsakhOnline)

The video of the Award Ceremony can be watched at:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxyZ6LpSzvo&feature=channel\\_page](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxyZ6LpSzvo&feature=channel_page)

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## MEDIA ALERT: NKR DEPUTY FM ARTICLE ABOUT ARTSAKH ADVOCACY IN US

DATE: March 10, 2009

TO: Media Colleagues

RE: NKR DEPUTY FM ARTICLE ABOUT ARTSAKH ADVOCACY IN US

On March 7, 2009, the Armenian Reporter published an article by Vardan Barseghian, NKR Deputy Foreign Minister.

Named 'Defending Artsakh's Interests in the United States', the publication offers a brief overview of Vardan Barseghian's nearly decade-long service as NKR Permanent Representative to the United States and a vision for continued Artsakh advocacy in Washington.

The full text of the article is provided below. You can also view it online at:

<http://www.reporter.am/go/article/2009-03-07-defending-artsakh-s-interests-in-the-united-states&pagewanted=all>

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### The Armenian Reporter

#### Defending Artsakh's Interests in the United States

by Vardan Barseghian,  
NKR Deputy Foreign Minister

Published: Saturday March 07, 2009

Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh - After I served nearly a decade as NKR permanent representative (ambassador) to the United States (August 1999-January 2009), President **Bako Sahakian** recently asked me to return to Artsakh to continue my carrier at the NKR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where I have since been appointed deputy minister.

Taking the opportunity of this medium, I want to, first of all, express gratitude to everyone who have contributed to the work of the Office of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in the United States (Artsakh's Embassy) and extended their friendship to me and my family throughout these years. I look forward to a continued engagement with all our well-wishers and to seeing you in Artsakh frequently.

This commentary will recap some of the accomplishments and offer a look to the future of Artsakh's diplomatic mission in the United States now led by my able successor **Robert Avetisian**.

Throughout my posting in Washington, the focus of our work has been on defending and advancing Artsakh's political and economic interests in the United States, on expansion of ties between our two countries, and on promotion of our shared objectives of regional peace, democracy, and prosperity.

We engaged with the State Department, Congress, policy and academic circles, media, and the Armenian-American community to build support for Artsakh's aspirations to live in freedom and secure from aggression, to facilitate humanitarian and investment projects that have helped rebuild Artsakh's war-torn infrastructure and also spurred economic development.

We worked closely with our allies on Capitol Hill and the Washington-based Armenian-American organizations to ensure continuation and expansion of U.S. direct economic assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh. It is fulfilling to see that in the fiscal 2009 budget, Congress allocated up to \$8,000,000 for aid programs in Nagorno-Karabakh. I thank the U.S. government and the American people for this critical assistance.

On political front, we continually educated members of Congress about Artsakh's ongoing struggle for freedom. As a result, over 100 members of the House of Representatives signed letters urging the U.S. president to take note of Artsakh's progress and to promote formal U.S. recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. In cooperation with Armenian-American organizations and our congressional friends, we organized several Capitol Hill events dedicated to Artsakh, bringing together members of Congress, prominent human rights advocates and lawyers, and hundreds of activists.

The office arranged and facilitated dozens of visits by senior NKR officials to the United States. These included bilateral visits and those in the framework of annual Armenia Fund telethons that have generated over \$150 million for major infrastructure projects in Artsakh and Armenia.

Seeking to raise international awareness about our struggle for freedom, we launched a first-ever comprehensive English-language website about Artsakh at [www.nkrusa.org](http://www.nkrusa.org). Thanks to this website we met many well-wishers worldwide. Some of these new friends ended up sponsoring projects in Artsakh; many also volunteered their skills and time.

Mindful of the importance of the modern media in our outreach efforts, we launched - ArtsakhOnline, a YouTube channel. One of our first installments, a short documentary film "Struggle for Freedom," produced in cooperation with Los Angeles filmmaker **Peter Musurlian**, has been watched over 10,000 times.

Since 1999, we have published a monthly newsletter distributed in print in Washington, the United States, and around the world. The newsletter was also available online. Last year, the newsletter transitioned to a more frequent electronic-only format distributed by email.

Our office monitored major media outlets, reacting when necessary to misrepresentations of Artsakh, while also promoting objective coverage. My letters to the editor appeared repeatedly in the *Washington Post*, *Washington Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Christian Science Monitor*. In Washington our work has been covered by the *Washington Diplomat*, *Diplomatic Traffic*, *Voice of America*, and *Eurasia Net*.

I had opportunities to speak at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the University of Texas, the Zoryan Institute in Toronto, and elsewhere. Under my leadership, the office facilitated expert research, conferences, visits to, and publications about Artsakh.

We worked closely with the Detroit-based Armenian Children's Relief Fund and other supporters to sponsor medical treatment for dozens of Artsakh children, as well as wounded veterans; we also connected benefactors to humanitarian projects in Artsakh.

More recently, in cooperation with the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and the Americans for Artsakh (AFA) we launched a series of professional training seminars for NKR officials. The first session successfully concluded last summer; the second session, focused on effective communication and conflict resolution, is currently underway in Stepanakert.

Hundreds of friends, Armenians and non-Armenians alike, have stood by the office throughout these years, providing financial support, volunteering their expertise and time, and helping to advance our common objectives.

On behalf of my government, I thank again the Armenian Assembly of America, the Cafesjian Family Foundation, the AGBU, and the Armenian Missionary Association of America and their leadership for extending critical financial and technical support throughout these years. Special thanks to **Armen Kanayan** of Stratomedia for his tireless volunteer efforts to develop and maintain our website; I also want to single out **Joan Ablett** and **Emil Sanamyan** for their support.

This is the short list of our efforts so far. What is next for Artsakh advocacy in America?

As with any institution, greater financial security of our office remains a priority to be able not only to maintain but also to expand our operations. It is also time for Artsakh's diplomatic representation to have its own roof in Washington.

Our political agenda should remain in focus. The United States remains a global leader and one of the lead mediators in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, and that means a sustained and deepened engagement with all branches of the U.S. government is needed. In Congress, that means reaching out both to our friends and opponents, as we have done in the past.

Speaking with one voice on Artsakh is critical to success. Through collaboration with the Armenian Embassy and Washington-based Armenian-American organizations, we have established this common agenda on Artsakh: (1) expansion of U.S.-NKR relations; (2) continuation of U.S. direct aid to Artsakh while transitioning from humanitarian to development projects; and (3) safeguarding regional peace.

Artsakh and the United States share universal values of freedom, democracy, and peace. We both fought fierce wars (although some 200 years apart) to free ourselves from foreign tyranny, to be the masters of our own destiny, and to enjoy the promise of liberty, equality, and justice for all.

Sharing many of the modern challenges, we are also partners in advancing common goals of peace and economic development. This is a great foundation to take the U.S.-NKR relations to the next level, ensuring unhindered communication and collaboration.

Expansion of U.S. economic aid to Artsakh while transitioning from humanitarian to development projects is critical to ensuring that all parts of the South Caucasus region receive equal opportunities to rebuild war-damaged infrastructure, providing aid to refugees and internally displaced persons, and ensuring steady economic development. Drinking water, healthcare, and mine clearance remain on the top of our priorities and Artsakh will continue to be an effective and responsible partner in advancing all aid programs.

At the same time, considering the genocidal rhetoric and increasing capabilities of our opponents, the possibility of renewed aggression against the Armenian nation is unfortunately all too real.

We are confident in our ability to defend ourselves, but our overriding diplomatic priority is to preempt a new war, saving lives on both sides of the current divide while building on a promise of a peaceful future for all.

Artsakh's noble struggle is continuing on political, diplomatic, economic, informational, and cultural fronts. Unity in purpose and action remains the key to our sustained success in Washington and elsewhere around the world.

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